

Claims

1. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, comprising the steps of:

- (a) composing an optically readable indicia;
- (b) applying said optically readable indicia to an object;
- (c) optically scanning said indicia to generate an electronic representation of said indicia;
- (d) storing said electronic representation of said indicia, said storing being done by a device used to perform said optical scanning;
- (e) downloading said electronic representation of said indicia to a computing device;
- (f) causing said computing device to communicate a signal to a central server, said signal including information to identify said optically readable indicia;
- (g) programming said central server to associate said optically readable indicia with a plurality of addresses in response to selected criteria, whereby said optically readable indicia is associated with different addresses in response to differences in said selected criteria;
- (h) said central server being responsive to said signal i) to contact a server at an address associated with said signal and said optically readable indicia, and ii) obtain information from said server associated with said address and communicate said information received from said server associated with said address to said computing device for display or other use at said computing device.

2. A method as in claim 1, wherein said central server is responsive, to said signal to contact said server at an address associated with said signal and said

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1 7. A method as in claim 5, wherein said printing comprises printing of said
2 optically readable indicia by said central server.

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4 8. A method as in claim 1, wherein said criteria comprises differences in time,
5 whereby said optically readable indicia is associated in response to differences in
6 time with different addresses over time.

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8 9. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, comprising the
9 steps of:

10 (a) composing an optically readable indicia containing information
11 respecting a plurality of different elements;

12 (b) applying said optically readable indicia to an object;

13 (c) using a scanning device to optically scan said indicia and generate an
14 electronic representation of said indicia;

15 (d) storing said electronic representation of said indicia, said storing being
16 done by said device used to perform said optical scanning;

17 (e) downloading said electronic representation of said indicia to a
18 computing device;

19 (f) causing said computing device to communicate a signal to a central
20 server, said signal including information to identify said optically readable
21 indicia;

22 (g) programming said central server to associate said optically readable
23 indicia with a plurality of addresses in response to selected criteria selected from
24 said information respecting a plurality of different elements, whereby said
25 optically readable indicia is associated with different addresses in response to
26 differences in said selected criteria;

27 (h) said central server being responsive to said signal

28 i) to contact a server at an address associated with said signal and

1 said optically readable indicia at the time of said contacting of said server, and
 2 ii) obtain information from said server associated with said address
 3 and communicate said information received from said server associated with
 4 said address to said computing device for display or other use at said computing
 5 device.

6 10. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 9,
 7 wherein a consumer specific record is generated in response to the
 8 communication of said signal to said central server.

9 11. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 10,
 10 wherein said consumer specific record contains information identifying such
 11 consumer.

12 12. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 11,
 13 wherein said information identifying such consumer is identification data
 14 contained on the hard drive of said computing device.

15 13. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 9,
 16 wherein said indicia is a bar-code.

17 14. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 9,
 18 wherein said communication causes the downloading of information responsive
 19 to particular consumer attributes and/or information and coded with an set
 20 signal, and/or a direct site address.

21 15. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 9,
 22 wherein said communication results in transfer of the inquiry to a site unrelated
 23 to a site associated with the optically readable indicia scanned by the consumer.

24 16. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 15,
 25 wherein said transfer to said unrelated site is accompanied by an explanation to
 26 the consumer.

27 17. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 15,
 28 wherein said transfer to said unrelated site is accompanied by a payment to an

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individual associated with the composing of said optically readable indicia.

18. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, comprising the steps of:

(a) composing an indicia containing information respecting a plurality of different elements;

(b) incorporating said indicia into an audiovisual production;

(c) using a device capable of detecting said indicia to generate an electronic representation of said indicia;

(d) storing said electronic representation of said indicia, said storing being done by said device used to perform said optical scanning;

(e) downloading said electronic representation of said indicia to a computing device;

(f) causing said computing device to communicate a signal to a central server, said signal including information to identify said indicia;

(g) said central server being responsive to said signal

i) to contact a server at an address associated with said signal and said indicia, and

ii) obtain information from said server associated with said address and communicate said information received from said server associated with said address to said computing device for display or other use at said computing device.

19. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 18, wherein a plurality of addresses are associated with said signal and said server is contacted and produces address information in response to selected criteria, said criteria being selected from said information respecting a plurality of different elements, whereby said indicia is associated with different addresses in response to differences in said selected criteria.

20. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 18,

- 1 wherein said indicia is an audio cue.
- 2 21. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 18,
- 3 wherein said indicia is a pattern displayed on the cathode ray tube of a television
- 4 screen.
- 5 22. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 18,
- 6 wherein said indicia is a series of flashes of various duration produced by the
- 7 cathode ray tube of a television set.
- 8 23. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 18,
- 9 wherein said indicia comprises a sequence of tones having different frequencies.
- 10 24. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 18,
- 11 wherein said indicia comprises a number of tones of different frequencies output
- 12 by said audio device simultaneously.
- 13 25. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 18,
- 14 wherein said indicia comprises a sequence of tones having different frequencies,
- 15 and additional tones output during the output of said sequence at frequencies
- 16 different from the tones of said sequence.
- 17 26. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 18,
- 18 wherein said indicia are transmitted periodically during the course of an
- 19 audiovisual program that correspond to content related to the substance of said
- 20 program.
- 21 27. A method for supplying information to consumers on request, as in claim 18,
- 22 wherein said indicia are transmitted periodically during the course of an
- 23 audiovisual program and have a content that correspond to the particular
- 24 portion of the program approximately during which they are transmitted.
- 25 28. A method according to claim 1 wherein the optically readable indicia
- 26 comprise invisible ink barcoding or digital watermarking.
- 27 29. A method according to claim 1 wherein the indicia are readable by a
- 28 magnetic or other non-optical device.

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